Wilderness

Shale Butte WSA (57-2). None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness. This alternative would have no beneficial impacts on the wilderness resource. Activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV) use, livestock management, mining, and fire suppression could have adverse impacts on wilderness resources.

The entire WSA is accessible to trailbike use and, except for a number of very rough areas, four-wheel drive vehicles. Recreational ORV use is presently low (less than 1,000 visits/year) in this unit. Long term use trends for the region (Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation 1977) indicate that ORV use could increase to levels that would have adverse impacts on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in the WSA.

Livestock management would require the occasional use of vehicles on ways inside the WSA for various management activities. This use would have a minor adverse impact on solitude values in the WSA.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Fire suppression activities inside the WSA could include the use of heavy equipment that would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness. Since fires occur frequently (one every five years) there is a fair chance that over the long term some damage to the wilderness resource due to fire suppression activities would occur. Fires would continue to create conditions that are unfavorable to vegetation that is representative of the potential natural vegetation for this area (Sagebrush-Steppe).

Sand Butte WSA (57-8). All of the WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. If designated, wilderness resource values would be maintained throughout the WSA. Existing ways and roads inside the WSA would be used occasionally by motorized vehicles for the purpose of livestock management. This use would have a slight adverse impact on the wilderness values of solitude. Boundary roads would be improved and maintained to facilitate fire suppression. The wilderness value of naturalness would benefit from this since fewer fires would burn into the WSA from outside the unit and a more natural fire cycle could be established. However, restricted fire suppression inside the WSA could result in a larger average fire size for fires that start within the unit.

If Congress does not designate the area wilderness and it is dropped from further wilderness study, activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV) use, livestock management, mining, and fire suppression could have adverse impacts on wilderness resources.

Although the entire WSA is accessible to trailbike use, and in a few areas close to existing roads and ways accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles, recreational ORV use is presently low (less than 1,000 visits/year) in this unit. Long-term use trends for the region (Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation 1977) indicate that ORV use would increase to levels that would have adverse impacts on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in the WSA.

Livestock management would require the occasional use of vehicles on ways and cherrystem roads inside the WSA for various management activities. This use would have a minor adverse impact on solitude values in the WSA.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Fire suppression activity inside the WSA could include the use of heavy equipment that would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness. Some portions of the WSA have fires fairly frequently (three times in the last 25 years), although most of the WSA has burned at a much lower frequency. Given the fire history of this area, it is reasonable to assume that, over the long run, heavy equipment would be used in the unit for fire suppression. The use of this equipment would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness.

Raven's Eye WSA (57-10). All of the WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. If designated wilderness, resource values would be maintained throughout the WSA. Existing ways and roads inside the WSA would be used occasionally by motorized vehicles for the purpose of livestock management. This use would have a slight adverse impact on the wilderness values of solitude. Boundary roads would be improved and maintained to facilitate fire suppression. The wilderness value of naturalness would benefit from this since fewer fires would burn into the WSA from outside the unit and a more natural fire cycle could be established. However, restricted fire suppression inside the WSA could result in a larger average fire size for fires that start within the unit.

If Congress does not designate the WSA wilderness and it is dropped from further wilderness study, activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV) use, livestock management, mining, and fire suppression could have adverse impacts on wilderness resources.

Approximately 47 percent of the WSA is accessible to trailbike use. A much smaller area, close to existing roads and ways, is accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles. Although recreational ORV use is presently low (less than 1,000 visits/year) in this unit, long-term use trends for the region (Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation 1977) indicate that ORV use would increase to levels that would have adverse impacts on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in those portions of the WSA that are accessible.

Livestock management would require the occasional use of vehicles on ways and cherrystem roads inside the WSA for various management activities. This use would have a minor adverse impact on solitude values in the WSA.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Fire suppression activity on 47 percent of the WSA could include the use of heavy equipment that would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness. The remainder of the WSA is so barren of vegetation that fires of more than an acre or two rarely occur. In addition, that part of the WSA is so rugged that fire suppression using heavy equipment would not be attempted. Given the fire history of this area, it is reasonable to assume that, over the long run, heavy equipment would be used in the unit for fire suppression. The use of this equipment would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness in those portions of the WSA accessible to heavy equipment.

Little Deer WSA (57-11). None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness. This alternative would have no beneficial impacts on the wilderness resource. Activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV) use, livestock management, mining, and fire suppression could have adverse impacts on wilderness resources.

Approximately 38 percent of the WSA is accessible to trailbike use. A smaller area close to existing roads and ways is accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles. Although recreational ORV use is presently low (less than 1,000 visits/year) in this unit, long term use trends for the region (Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation 1977) indicate that ORV use could increase to levels that would have adverse impacts on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in those portions of the WSA that are accessible.

Livestock management requires the occasional use of vehicles on ways and cherrystem roads inside the WSA for various management activities. This use would have a minor adverse impact on solitude values in the WSA.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Fire suppression activities on 38 percent of the WSA could include the use of heavy equipment that would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness. The remainder of the WSA is so barren of vegetation that fires of more than an acre or two rarely occur. In addition, that part of the WSA is so rugged that fire suppression using heavy equipment would not be attempted. Given the fire history of this area, it is reasonable to assume

that, over the long run, heavy equipment would be used in the unit for fire suppression. The use of this equipment would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness in those portions of the WSA accessible to heavy equipment.

Bear Den Butte WSA (57-14). None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness. This alternative would have no beneficial impacts on the wilderness resource. Activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV) use, livestock management, mining, and fire suppression could have adverse impacts on wilderness resources.

Approximately 56 percent of the WSA is accessible to trailbike use. A much smaller area close to existing roads and ways is accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles. Although recreational ORV use is presently low (less than 1,000 visits/year) in this unit, long term use trends for the region (Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation 1977) indicate that ORV use could increase to levels that would have adverse impacts on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in those portions of the WSA that are accessible.

Livestock management requires the occasional use of vehicles on ways inside the WSA for various management activities. This use would have a minor adverse impact on solitude values in the WSA.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Fire suppression activities on 56 percent of the WSA could include the use of heavy equipment that would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness. The remainder of the WSA is so barren of vegetation that fires of more than an acre or two rarely occur. In addition, that part of the WSA is so rugged that fire suppression using heavy equipment would not be attempted. Given the fire history of this area, it is reasonable to assume that, over the long run, heavy equipment would be used in the unit for fire suppression. The use of this equipment would have an adverse impact on the wilderness value of naturalness in those portions of the WSA accessible to heavy equipment.

Shoshone WSA (59-7). None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness. This alternative would have no beneficial impacts on the wilderness resource. The only activity that would have an adverse impact on wilderness values is mining. The WSA is so rugged that it is not used by other activities such as livestock management, recreational ORV use, and fire suppression.

Although no mining claims exist within the WSA at present, development of new claims or leases would have an adverse impact on wilderness values of

naturalness and solitude. The potential for locatable or leasable minerals occurring in the WSA is low (Fredericksen and Fernette 1983), and the probability of damage to wilderness resources from mineral development is also low.

Natural History

Project work that occurred in four of the AGI would be examined to ensure that access to sensitive areas would not be improved.

Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood would be protected from human disturbance that would impair natural history values in the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. This includes alluvial gravel deposits; mineral material sale and free use would be prohibited.

Resource use proposals would be examined closely to prevent degradation of natural history values related to the unique alcove ecosystem in the proposed Box Canyon National Natural Landmark.

Cultural Resources

Since any Bureau authorized or initiated action recognizes and accommodates cultural resources by virtue of our standard operating procedures (see Appendix H), the only activity which may damage these resources is unplanned public use. Such activities include unauthorized recreational vehicle use, artifact collection, and illegal excavation for materials and antiquities. The location of these activities is impossible to predict and may occur in spite of measures designed to exclude or limit them.

Effects of Alternative C would be the same as Alternative B with 5,550 acres of high density cultural resource areas being protected by ORV closure, 2,240 acres of high density areas protected by ORV limitations in the Cedar Fields SRMA, and 7,685 acres of high density areas protected by limited disturbance.

Recreation

The growth rates discussed below are long-term (20-year) projections. The projected growth rates, both short-term (5-year) and long-term, are listed in Table 2-3 for various recreation activities.

Growth of nature study, fishing and dispersed recreation activities would surpass growth of these activities if present management, as reflected in

Alternative A, would continue. Growth of hunting and ORV visitor use days would not be as pronounced as if present management were continued. Recreation opportunities would generally decrease in quality. Recreationists would experience greater competition for recreation resources and recreation-related conflicts would increase.

Nature study would experience a 48 percent increase in contrast to a 40 percent increase under present management. This would occur as a result of wilderness designation of Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs and by the reduction of sediment in lower Vineyard Creek. Wilderness designation would improve or maintain the natural character of these areas by excluding disturbing influences such as ORVs, some rangeland improvements, and potential utility or transportation corridors. Lower sediment levels in Vineyard Creek would enhance the natural character of the area by improving the fisheries habitat for spawning hybrid cutthroat trout and the visual quality of the stream. *The special designation status of the Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs, Vineyard Creek, and Substation Tract ACECs and the two WSAs would increase public awareness of the areas. This would also contribute to the increase in nature study.*

Dispersed recreation activities such as hiking and camping would experience increases slightly above projected levels due to reduced interaction with ORVs in Sand Butte and Raven's Eye WSAs and an improved visual quality of Vineyard Creek. Increased contact between ORV users and horseback riders or hikers in the Snake River Rim area would reduce riding and hiking activities from the levels they may have attained had the existing ORV limitation been left in place.

Mule deer hunting activity would increase 291 percent rather than 300 percent in Alternative A as a result of wilderness designation of Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs. The elimination of ORV use in these areas, resulting from wilderness designation, would make entry and game retrieval in these prime hunting areas more difficult.

Visitor use days attributable to pheasant and Hungarian partridge hunting would increase by 84 percent and 96 percent respectively. Alternative A would result in an 88 percent and 100 percent increase, respectively. Land transfer and agricultural development would adversely effect upland bird hunting by eliminating critical wintering cover for birds and access on these parcels. Access to huntable areas would be a major concern in the future as more private lands are posted. However, the Reclamation transfer would provide additional acres of pheasant habitat, most of which would be open to hunting.

Off-road vehicle use would increase by 99 percent compared to a 100 percent increase under present management as a result of ORV closures in wilderness areas and the associated Sand Butte closure area. Moderate limitations on ORV use in Cedar Fields would adversely effect ORV use. Lifting of the "Designated Roads and Trails Only" ORV limitation in a portion of the Snake River Rim area would expand ORV opportunities there.

Potential for developing a cross-country ORV trail between the Snake River Rim SRMA and Bear Trap Cave would be preserved. Tracts vital to development of the trail would be retained in Federal ownership.

Scenic quality in Cedar Fields would improve as a result of ORV limitations in the area. Future resource uses and proposals would be closely examined to prevent degradation of scenic quality in Vineyard Creek and Box Canyon.

Soils

Erosion would increase by 8 percent to 5.2 tons/acre/year. Of the 1,178,989 acres in the planning area, 39,248 acres (3 percent) would have a severe erosion problem by the end of 20 years. This increase would be primarily due to increased livestock stocking rates, land treatments, and management facilities. These activities would reduce vegetation cover. In the case of land treatments, the actual effect would be short term at the time the vegetation is disturbed. However, the effect has been averaged into the long term for this analysis. Erosion would be reduced on 2,423 acres of ORV closures or limitations, and on 150 acres of sand dunes proposed for seeding. Soil productivity could be reduced on 11,846 acres adjacent to and downwind from land transfers developed for agriculture *because of sand deposition from new farm fields.* Appendix I contains a discussion about changes in erosion rates and the equations used to estimate erosion rates.

Minerals and Energy

Wilderness designation would restrict mineral activities on 87,902 acres. New mining claims would be prohibited after wilderness designation, as well as sale or free-use of mineral materials. Valid existing rights of mining claimants would be protected. Few locatable mineral resources have been identified to date. No significant mineral resources are known to occur within the WSAs recommended suitable. Energy mineral leasing activities could be restricted to protect wilderness character. Areas within WSAs are considered to have low potential for oil and gas and geothermal energy production and there has been little or no exploration activity.

Minor restriction of mining activity would result from ORV limitations on 2,240 acres of lands designated mineral in character in the Cedar Fields SRMA. Minor restriction of mineral lease development would result from surface occupancy restrictions in Vineyard Creek ACEC, Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC, Substation Tract ACEC, and Areas of Geologic Interest.

Mineral material sale or free use would be prohibited on 1,264 acres within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Most of this area has potential for mineral material deposits.

Material sites currently in use on 540 acres would be lost to public use by transfer. *Possible mineral material deposits on 2,623 acres* would be lost by transfer. Loss of these material sites could cause considerable hardship and higher costs to highway departments and the public who depend upon these sites for mineral materials.

Transfer could create problems of split estate ownership, a situation where the surface is privately owned, but the subsurface mineral rights are Federally owned. This could make mineral exploration more complicated, time consuming, and expensive.

Economic Conditions

Appendix J contains a detailed comparison of the economic effects of each alternative.

Grazing Related Economic Effects. By the end of 20 years, this alternative would generate additional income for the livestock permittees of *$837,000* annually. This is based on the ranch budgeting results. The effects by size group are shown in Table 4-3. This would be a *63* percent increase over current income generated by BLM grazing use in the planning area. This would be less than a 1 percent increase in income in the agriculture sector of the local economy. Grazing-related employment would increase by *46* jobs, which would be roughly a 1 percent increase in the agricultural sector employment.

TABLE 4-3

LIVESTOCK INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT CHANGES
ALTERNATIVE C

Size Group	Proposed Grazing Use	Change in Use	Income Change	Employment Change
1	*16,962*	*+ 5,340*	*+ $ 99,324*	*+ 5.5*
2	*32,640*	*+10,277*	*+ $191,152*	*+10.5*
3	*49,963*	*+15,732*	*+ $292,615*	*+16.1*
4	*43,314*	*+13,638*	*+ $253,667*	*+13.9*
Total	*142,879*	*+44,987*	*+ $836,758*	*+46.0*

The secondary (multiplier) effect of this alternative would add another *$521,500* in earnings and *29* additional jobs to the local economy.

There would be a total of *$1,602,700* spent on range improvements with this alternative. This would convert to earnings of *$920,000* and 42 jobs. This would be short term in nature and the jobs would only last until the improvements were installed. In addition, there would be annual maintenance costs of $33,500, which would convert to annual income of $19,200. This would add one job to the local economy.

Grazing fee collections would be increased with this alternative in the following manner:

Range Improvement Fund	+ *$ 44,987*
Federal Treasury	+ *$ 33,740*
State of Idaho	+ *$ 11,247*
Total	+ *$ 89,974*

The total capital value of the AUMs gained would amount to between *$2.5* million and *$11.3* million.

Recreation-Related Economic Effects. By the end of 20 years, the annual direct and secondary income generated by recreation-related activities would increase by $2 million. This would represent a 14 percent increase in retail trade earnings over present levels. There would be approximately 202 jobs added in recreation-related employment by year 20. This would be an increase of 15 percent over current retail trade employment.

Crop Agriculture-Related Economic Effects. *This alternative could lead to development for irrigated agriculture of 26,570 acres (assuming allowances on all acres). This is made up of 2,155 acres of Desert Land Act development and 24,415 acres of Carey Act development. This would equate to 126 new farms of 210 acres each.*

The total cost of electricity used and lost from downstream generation would be $11.0 million. Irrigators would pay 16 percent or $1.8 million, while other Columbia River System electricity consumers would pay 84 percent or $9.2 million.

The potential production of crops would be 6 percent of current planning area production of alfalfa, 11 percent of barley production, and 22 percent of potato production. Total potential production would be 29,279 tons of alfalfa; 487,266 bushels of barley; and 2,091,128 cwt of potatoes. This level of potato production would be 0.6 percent of the 1980 national production of potatoes. This could lead to a 4 percent reduction in potato prices. However, if expected displacement occurs, then the total increase in national production would be only 209,113 cwt or .06 percent of national production. The impact on overall potato prices would be insignificant.

The one-time costs of installing water delivery and irrigation systems would be $8.4 million. Annual expenditures for seed, fertilizers, herbicides, and fungicides would be $4.5 million. An additional $0.7 million would be spent on fuel for tractors and equipment.

There would be a direct income gain of $841,400 with this alternative. The secondary income gains would amount to $2.1 million. Ranchers currently using the area would lose direct income of $109,000. Secondary losses would amount to $168,900. In addition, ranchers would lose capital value of between $326,000 and $1,468,000.